

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-24. (Canceled)

25-43. (Withdrawn)

44-82. (Canceled)

83. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 90 wherein the assembly station comprises a carrier moveable relative to the alternating one of rows and columns between a first position, where it picks the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece, and a second position, where it assembles the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece.

84. (Canceled)

85. (Withdrawn)

86-87. (Canceled)

88. (Withdrawn)

89. (Withdrawn)

90. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet, wherein the plastic sheet comprises alternating one of rows and columns of the first thermoformed workpieces and the second thermoformed workpieces;

a trim station for trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet to form a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece; and

an assembly station for assembling the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece to form the composite article while the second thermoformed workpiece remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet.

91. (Withdrawn)

92. (Withdrawn)

93. (Currently Amended) The An automated manufacturing line of claim 115 wherein the for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet;

a trim station for individually trimming at least the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet; and

an assembly station for assembling assemblies the first and second thermoformed workpieces by press-fitting the first and second thermoformed workpieces.

94. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 93 wherein the press-fitting of the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece and the second thermoformed workpiece is a snap-fit.

95. (Currently Amended) The An automated manufacturing line of claim 115 wherein the for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by

~~automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:~~

~~a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet;~~

~~a trim station for individually trimming at least the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet; and~~

~~-----an assembly station for assembling~~assembles the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece by an adhesive coupling to form the composite article.

96. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet;

a trim station for individually trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet to form a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece; and

an assembly station for assembling the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece to form the composite article while the second thermoformed workpiece remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet comprising a carrier moveable between a first position, where it picks the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece, and a second position, where it assembles the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece.

97. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 96 wherein the carrier comprises a suction device to pick the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece as it is trimmed from the sheet and hold the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece as it is carried to the second thermoformed workpiece.

98. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 97 wherein the carrier comprises a force reliever to control the amount of force applied by the carrier to the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece and the second thermoformed workpiece as they are assembled.

99. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 98 wherein the carrier comprises a reciprocating arm on an end of which the suction device is mounted.

100. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 99 wherein the force reliever mounts the suction device to the end of the arm.

101. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 99 wherein the reciprocating arm reciprocates between a pick-up position that corresponds to the first position, and an assembly position that corresponds to the second position.

102. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 101 wherein the reciprocating arm reciprocates between the pick-up and assembly positions in a direction that is either parallel or transverse to the machine direction as defined by the movement of the plastic sheet through the assembly station.

103. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 101 wherein the trim station comprises a first punch and die set for trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet.

104. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 103 wherein the die comprises an inlet opening in which the punch is received to trim the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet when the plastic sheet is positioned between the punch and die, and an outlet opening into which the reciprocating arm extends to pick up the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece when the reciprocating arm is in the pick-up position.

105. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 104 wherein the assembly station further comprises a moveable platform carrying the reciprocating arm and which is moveable between a first position where the reciprocating arm is positioned within the die outlet, and a second position where the reciprocating arm is positioned outside of the die outlet.

106. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 105 wherein there are multiple reciprocating arms, with at least one of the arms at the pick-up position when another of the arms is at the assembly position providing for the contemporaneous pick-up of a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece while a previously pick-up trimmed first thermoformed workpiece is being assembled to the second thermoformed workpiece.

107. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 106 wherein the trim station further comprises a second punch and die set for trimming the assembled first and second thermoformed workpieces from the plastic sheet.

108. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 106 wherein there are multiple carriers.

109. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 108 wherein the multiple carriers are arranged in at least two sets, wherein when one of the at least two sets is in the first position, the other of the at least two sets is in the second position providing for the contemporaneous pick-up of a first trimmed thermoformed workpiece while a previously pick-up trimmed first thermoformed workpiece is being assembled to the second thermoformed workpiece.

110. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 96 wherein the movement of the carriers between the first and second positions is either generally parallel or transverse to the machine direction as defined by the movement of the plastic sheet through the assembly station.

111. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 96 wherein the trim station comprises a first punch and die set for trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet.

112. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 111 wherein the die comprises an inlet opening in which the punch is received to trim the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet when the plastic sheet is positioned between the punch and die, and an outlet opening into which the carrier extends to pick up the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece.

113. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 111 wherein the trim station further comprises a second punch and die set for trimming the assembled first and second thermoformed workpieces from the plastic sheet.

114. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

- a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet;

- a trim station for individually trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet to form a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece; and

- an assembly station for assembling the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece to form the composite article while the second thermoformed workpiece remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet by moving the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece directly from the trim station onto the second thermoformed workpiece without temporarily storing the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece prior to assembly to the second thermoformed workpiece.

115. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet comprising a portion of a web of plastic;

a trim station for individually trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet to form a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece; and

an assembly station for assembling the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece to form the composite article while the second thermoformed workpiece remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet.

116. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a composite article from first and second thermoformed workpieces by automatically assembling the first thermoformed workpiece to the second thermoformed workpiece, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the first and second thermoformed workpieces in a plastic sheet;

a trim station for individually trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet to form a trimmed first thermoformed workpiece; and

an assembly station for assembling the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece to form the composite article while the second thermoformed workpiece remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet;

wherein the sheet comprises opposing front and rear sides, and the trim station trims the first thermoformed workpiece from the front side, and the assembly station assembles the trimmed thermoformed workpiece onto the second thermoformed workpiece on the front side.

117. (Previously Presented) An automated manufacturing line for making a recloseable lid assembly comprising a lid with a drink opening and a closure tab for selectively closing the drink opening, comprising:

a thermoforming station for thermoforming the lid and the closure tab in a plastic sheet;

a trim station for trimming one of the lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet;
and

an assembly station for assembling the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab to the other of the lid and closure tab to form the recloseable lid assembly while the other of the lid and closure tab remains untrimmed in the plastic sheet.

118. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 117 wherein the assembly station assembles the lid and closure tab by press-fitting together the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab onto the other of the lid and closure tab.

119. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 118 wherein the press-fitting of the lid and closure tab is a snap-fit.

120. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 117 wherein the assembly station assembles the lid and closure tab by an adhesive coupling.

121. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 117 wherein the assembly station assembles the lid and closure tab by an ultrasonic weld.

122. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 117 wherein the assembly station comprises a carrier moveable between a first position, where it picks the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab, and a second position, where it assembles the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab to the other of the one of the lid and closure tab.

123. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 122 wherein the carrier comprises a suction device to pick the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab as it is trimmed from the sheet and hold the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab as it is carried to the other of the lid and the closure tab.

124. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 123 wherein the carrier comprises a force reliever to control the amount of force applied by the carrier to the lid and closure tab as they are assembled.

125. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 124 wherein the carrier comprises a reciprocating arm on an end of which the suction device is mounted.

126. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 125 wherein the force reliever mounts the suction device to the end of the arm.

127. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 125 wherein the reciprocating arm reciprocates between a pick-up position that corresponds to the first position, and an assembly position that corresponds to the second position.

128. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 127 wherein the reciprocating arm reciprocates between the pick-up and assembly positions in a direction that is either parallel or transverse to the machine direction as defined by the movement of the plastic sheet through the assembly station.

129. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 127 wherein the trim station comprises a first punch and die set for trimming the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet.

130. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 129 wherein the die comprises an inlet opening in which the punch is received to trim the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet when the plastic sheet is positioned between the punch and die, and an outlet opening into which the reciprocating arm extends to pick up the trimmed first thermoformed workpiece when the reciprocating arm is in the pick-up position.

131. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 130 wherein the assembly station further comprises a moveable platform carrying the reciprocating arm and which is moveable between a first position where the reciprocating arm is positioned within the die outlet, and a second position where the reciprocating arm is positioned outside of the die outlet.

132. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 131 wherein there are multiple reciprocating arms, with at least one of the arms at the pick-up position when another of the arms is at the assembly position providing for the contemporaneous pick-up of a trimmed one of the lid and closure tab while a previously picked-up trimmed one of the lid and closure tab is being assembled to the other of the lid and closure tab.

133. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 132 wherein the trim station further comprises a second punch and die set for trimming the assembled lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet.

134. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 122 wherein there are multiple carriers.

135. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 134 wherein the multiple carriers are arranged in at least two sets, wherein when one of the at least two sets is in the first position, the other of the at least two sets is in the second position.

136. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 122 wherein the movement of the carriers between the first and second positions is either generally parallel or transverse to the machine direction as defined by the movement of the plastic sheet through the assembly station.

137. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 122 wherein the trim station comprises a first punch and die set for trimming the first thermoformed workpiece from the plastic sheet.

138. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 137 wherein the die comprises an inlet opening in which the punch is received to trim the one of the lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet when the plastic sheet is positioned between the punch and die, and an outlet opening into which the carrier extends to pick up the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab.

139. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 137 wherein the trim station further comprises a second punch and die set for trimming the assembled lid and closure tab from the plastic sheet.

140. (Previously Presented) The automated manufacturing line according to claim 117 wherein the assembly station moves the trimmed one of the lid and closure tab directly from the trim station onto the other of the lid and closure tab without temporarily storing the trimmed one of lid and closure tab prior to assembly.